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PITTSBURGH CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: LOCAL PRICES UP 3.3 PERCENT OVER-THE-YEAR

Retail prices in the Pittsburgh area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), rose 3.3 percent since the first half of 2000, the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that higher energy prices were responsible for over two-fifths of the increase. The energy index, which reflects pricing for gasoline and household fuels, was up 18.3 percent over the year. (See table 1.)

The housing index rose 4.9 percent, as each of the three main components of the category had higher prices. Shelter and household furnishings and operations had relatively modest over-the-year increases, 1.3 and 2.3 percent, respectively. The fuels and utilities index rose 22.6 percent, as electricity rates increased 5.5 percent and natural gas rates soared 54.6 percent. Nearly two-thirds of the increase in the housing index was due to higher prices for natural gas.

Transportation prices, which account for approximately one-fifth of the overall index, increased 3.1 percent since the first half of 2000. Private transportation, which includes the cost of vehicles and motor fuels, rose 3.2 percent over the year. Gasoline prices were up 4.6 percent over the last twelve months.

Food and beverages prices were up 3.2 percent from last year; food at home prices rose 3.9 percent, but that increase was moderated by a 1.7 percent rise in food away from home prices. Alcoholic beverages prices were 2.3 percent higher than last January.

The education and communication index increased 5.0 percent over the year—the largest increase of any of the major categories that make up the CPI-U. Other goods and services prices rose 2.9 percent in the last twelve months. Medical care costs were up 1.7 percent.

Recreation and apparel were the only major categories whose prices decreased in Pittsburgh since the first half of 2000. Recreation prices were down 1.1 percent, while apparel prices decreased 0.6 percent.

The CPI reflects two types of expenditures, services and commodities. Both services and commodities prices rose over the last twelve months, up 4.4 and 1.9 percent, respectively. Services accounted for nearly three-quarters of the twelve-month increase in the CPI-U.

The CPI-U for the Pittsburgh area stood at 172.4 on the 1982-84=100 reference base, which means that a market basket of goods and services which averaged \$100.00 in the 1982-84 period would have cost \$172.40 in the first half of 2001. The Pittsburgh area includes Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties.

NOTE: Beginning with January 1998, the Consumer Price Indexes are calculated on a revised basis, using 1993-95 expenditure patterns and updated population weights. In addition, changes have been made to the geographic sample, the item classification system, and the structure of publication tables. As a result of the general revision of the CPI, Pittsburgh data will henceforth be available only on a semiannual basis.

Also, several categories have been reconfigured to more accurately reflect current purchasing patterns. For example, the entertainment index has been discontinued, while the new recreation category includes all of the former entertainment category along with cable TV and sewing (from housing), other sewing items (from apparel and upkeep), and recreational reading materials (from other goods and services). The titles of some groups have changed and the amount of published data for local areas has decreased.

Additional information on the 1998 CPI Revision is available on the Internet web site at <http://stats.bls.gov/cpihome.htm> or by calling (215) 597-3282.

Local area indexes are by-products of the national CPI program. Because each local index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is therefore subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. As a result, area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. Short-term changes in local indexes may reflect strictly seasonal influences.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes for semiannual averages and percent changes for selected periods, Pittsburgh, PA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Semiannual average indexes			Percent change to	
	1st half 2000	2nd half 2000	1st half 2001	1st half 2000	2nd half 2000
All items	166.9	169.0	172.4	3.3	2.0
All items (1967=100)	509.4	515.7	526.3	-	-
Food and beverages	158.1	160.4	163.1	3.2	1.7
Food	156.7	158.9	161.7	3.2	1.8
Food at home	155.1	157.4	161.2	3.9	2.4
Food away from home	160.4	162.1	163.1	1.7	.6
Alcoholic beverages	178.3	180.5	182.4	2.3	1.1
Housing	164.1	167.0	172.2	4.9	3.1
Shelter	183.1	185.0	185.4	1.3	.2
Rent of primary residence	160.9	161.3	163.0	1.3	1.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1)	181.7	182.9	183.9	1.2	.5
Fuels and utilities	145.1	153.4	177.9	22.6	16.0
Fuels	137.1	146.8	174.4	27.2	18.8
Gas (piped) and electricity	137.3	147.2	177.1	29.0	20.3
Electricity	138.4	138.4	146.0	5.5	5.5
Utility natural gas service	135.8	156.2	209.9	54.6	34.4
Household furnishings and operations ...	132.4	134.9	135.4	2.3	.4
Apparel	159.9	155.6	158.9	-.6	2.1
Transportation	138.7	140.5	143.0	3.1	1.8
Private transportation	137.9	140.0	142.3	3.2	1.6
Motor fuel	122.5	130.2	128.1	4.6	-1.6
Gasoline (all types)	122.7	130.4	128.3	4.6	-1.6
Gasoline, unleaded regular (2).....	120.7	128.4	126.2	4.6	-1.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (2) (3)..	132.0	140.1	138.0	4.5	-1.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium (2).....	121.6	128.9	127.0	4.4	-1.5
Medical care	247.6	249.8	251.9	1.7	.8
Recreation (4).....	106.7	105.7	105.5	-1.1	-.2
Education and communication (4).....	103.4	107.6	108.6	5.0	.9
Other goods and services	256.6	259.4	264.1	2.9	1.8
Commodity and service group					
Commodities	152.1	152.7	155.0	1.9	1.5
Commodities less food and beverages	147.2	147.0	149.1	1.3	1.4
Nondurables less food and beverages ...	160.3	159.9	162.3	1.2	1.5
Durables	131.0	131.0	132.6	1.2	1.2
Services	183.9	187.3	192.0	4.4	2.5
Special aggregate indexes					
All items less medical care	162.3	164.4	167.9	3.5	2.1
All items less shelter	162.7	164.9	169.2	4.0	2.6
Commodities less food	148.6	148.5	150.6	1.3	1.4
Nondurables	159.8	160.7	163.3	2.2	1.6
Nondurables less food	161.7	161.4	163.9	1.4	1.5
Services less rent of shelter (1)	190.0	195.3	203.5	7.1	4.2
Services less medical care services	178.8	182.4	187.2	4.7	2.6
Energy	130.4	139.2	154.2	18.3	10.8
All items less energy	172.0	173.4	175.4	2.0	1.2
All items less food and energy	176.1	177.3	179.1	1.7	1.0

1 Index is on a December 1982=100 base.

2 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

3 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

4 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.

Table 2. Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W):Indexes for semiannual averages and percent changes for selected periods, Pittsburgh, PA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Semiannual average indexes			Percent change to	
	1st half 2000	2nd half 2000	1st half 2001	1st half 2000	2nd half 2000
All items	161.2	162.8	166.2	3.1	2.1
All items (1967=100)	479.3	484.2	494.5	-	-
Food and beverages	158.0	160.3	162.9	3.1	1.6
Food	156.0	158.3	160.9	3.1	1.6
Food at home	153.7	156.1	159.7	3.9	2.3
Food away from home	161.5	163.3	164.2	1.7	.6
Alcoholic beverages	181.6	183.9	186.1	2.5	1.2
Housing	150.6	153.2	158.3	5.1	3.3
Shelter	161.2	162.7	163.2	1.2	.3
Rent of primary residence	160.9	161.3	163.0	1.3	1.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1).....	168.9	169.9	170.8	1.1	.5
Fuels and utilities	143.7	151.5	175.8	22.3	16.0
Fuels	134.7	143.7	170.5	26.6	18.6
Gas (piped) and electricity	137.8	147.3	176.2	27.9	19.6
Electricity	138.4	138.4	146.0	5.5	5.5
Utility natural gas service	135.8	156.2	209.9	54.6	34.4
Household furnishings and operations ...	128.0	130.0	130.5	2.0	.4
Apparel	162.1	157.5	161.9	-.1	2.8
Transportation	141.2	144.0	146.2	3.5	1.5
Private transportation	141.8	144.9	146.9	3.6	1.4
Motor fuel	122.5	130.2	128.1	4.6	-1.6
Gasoline (all types)	122.7	130.4	128.3	4.6	-1.6
Gasoline, unleaded regular (2).....	120.7	128.4	126.2	4.6	-1.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (2) (3)...	132.0	140.1	138.0	4.5	-1.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium (2).....	121.6	128.9	127.0	4.4	-1.5
Medical care	239.4	240.7	242.5	1.3	.7
Recreation (4).....	106.6	105.4	104.5	-2.0	-.9
Education and communication (4).....	103.1	106.7	107.9	4.7	1.1
Other goods and services	275.0	271.5	278.4	1.2	2.5
Commodity and service group					
Commodities	151.1	151.8	154.2	2.1	1.6
Commodities less food and beverages	145.6	145.3	147.6	1.4	1.6
Nondurables less food and beverages ...	161.1	160.3	163.2	1.3	1.8
Durables	123.9	124.5	125.9	1.6	1.1
Services	173.7	176.6	181.2	4.3	2.6
Special aggregate indexes					
All items less medical care	158.1	159.7	163.2	3.2	2.2
All items less shelter	161.7	163.4	167.8	3.8	2.7
Commodities less food	147.4	147.2	149.6	1.5	1.6
Nondurables	160.6	161.3	164.1	2.2	1.7
Nondurables less food	163.1	162.4	165.4	1.4	1.8
Services less rent of shelter (1).....	164.8	168.6	176.4	7.0	4.6
Services less medical care services	170.1	172.9	177.7	4.5	2.8
Energy	127.4	135.6	147.9	16.1	9.1
All items less energy	166.0	166.9	168.9	1.7	1.2
All items less food and energy	168.6	169.1	170.9	1.4	1.1

1 Index is on a December 1984=100 base.

2 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

3 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

4 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.